

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 29, 30, 34, 35 and 38 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Lucas et al U.S. Patent 3,729,886. Claims 29-39 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Louis et al U.S. Patent 5,979,145.

The claims have been amended in a manner believed to patentably define over the references.

The Lucas et al reference discloses an article banding system in which a band of wrapping material is applied about a compressed stack of paper towels. The web 116 is first folded downwardly about the sides of the article 14 by operation of downwardly inclined plows 64 (Figs. 1, 9). The band wings or side panels 68 are then firmly pressed against the side of the article by paired batteries of compression idler rollers shown at 70, 72, located on opposite sides of the linear article feed path. Referring to Fig. 12, a plow 82 then folds the unglued margin or wing flap 105 of side panel 68. Article 14 is supported as it passes over gap 95 by a belt 91 and by a table plate 97, which spans the gap 95 and includes a finger plate portion 88 that fills in the gap or space 93 between the belts 89, 91. Wing flap 105 is then moved into the gap or throat 115 between the top of the plow 82 and the table plate 97, and is applied to the leading end of a following belt 106 that underlies the bottom of stack 14. (column 4, lines 60-65). Belt 106 is located adjacent to an article support plate 109, which spans another gap 113 that is staggered with respect to gap 95. (column 4, lines 66-68). The undersurface of belt 91 is supported in the area of gap 95 by a plate 129 (Fig. 12), which is connected to plate 97 and has a tapered trailing edge 131 leading into plow 82. Similarly, a plate 133 (Fig. 13) having a tapered edge 135 (Fig. 9) supports belt 106 in the area of gap 113. (column 5, lines 8-13). Wing flap 114 (Fig. 13) is folded upwardly and beneath plate 109 by plow 83, which has a leading edge 103 that intercepts flap 114 and folds it up against the undersurface of plate 109 over belt 80 and against the undersurface of article 14. (column 5, lines 14-21). The glued margin of flap 114 then overlaps wing flap 105, and

the flaps are glued together. As the article 14 moves beyond the plate 109, the belt 80 presses the glued wing 114 against the wing 105 to complete the band by firmly uniting the overwrapped wings 105 and 114. (column 5, lines 19-27). A full appreciation of this structure requires a careful study of Figs. 12 and 13, which reveals that belt 91 and plate 97 are in a side-by-side relationship, and plate 109 is in a side-by-side relationship with wing 105, which is located over plate 133. This structure is further illustrated in Fig. 9. It can thus be appreciated that, when the flaps are overlapped and glued together, the overlapping area of the flaps is located over belt 80, which presses the wings together against the article 14 to complete the band. The Lucas et al reference does not disclose a member that is located between the overlapping area of the wings and the article when pressure is being applied to the overlapping area to complete the band.

The Louis et al reference discloses an upper film 34 and a lower film 35 that are wrapped about an article 1. A bearing plate 27 is located adjacent the side of the article 1, and a shaper 28 folds the edge portion of upper film 34 downwardly upon advancement of article 1. Shaper 28 folds the border of upper film 34, and a press roller 29 applies the upper film 34 to bearing plate 27. (column 6, lines 13-18). Similarly, the border of lower film 35 is folded upwardly by a shaper 31 and guided along a bearing plate 30, and is pressed against bearing plate 30 by a roller 32. (column 6, lines 18-22). The upper and lower borders are then joined together using means 33, which may be an external adhesive, a double sided adhesive, or autogenous welding. (column 6, lines 22-40). The joining means 33 is positioned so as to be located outwardly of the end area of internal bearing plate 27.

Claim 29 has been amended to state that the web application arrangement forms an overlapping area of the wrapping material at an overlap location. Claim 29 is further amended to specify that the bonding arrangement includes application means upstream of the overlap location for applying a bond-forming agent to the overlapping area of the wrapping material. The bonding arrangement is further defined as including an internal backing member located adjacent the elongated article and underlying the

overlapping area. Claim 29 is further amended to state that the internal backing member extends downstream from the overlap location and downstream from the application means. In addition, claim 29 calls for a pressure application arrangement located downstream of the application means. The pressure application arrangement is defined as including a pressure-applying member that bears against the overlapping area of the wrapping material and against the internal backing member to apply pressure to the overlapping area of the wrapping material and to the bond-forming agent to secure the overlapping area together.

Neither Lucas et al nor Louis et al are seen to show or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 29. As noted previously, Lucas et al does not disclose an internal backing member whatsoever, let alone a backing member that is located downstream of the area at which the web margins are brought into an overlapping relationship, as specifically set forth in amended claim 29. Rather, in Lucas et al, there are plates that support first one side of the article and then the other as the web margins are folded. After the margins are folded, however, the overlapping areas are located above a belt without the presence of a plate or any other backing member between the article and the overlapping areas of the web.

As to Louis et al, there is no disclosure of an application means located upstream of the overlap location, as claimed. In Louis et al, the joining means 33 is located downstream of the location at which the web borders are overlapped. Further, Louis et al does not show a pressure application arrangement having a pressure-applying member located downstream of the application means, as claimed, that bears against the overlapping area of the wrapping material and against the internal backing member to apply pressure to the overlapping area of the wrapping material and to the bond-forming agent, as claimed. Rather, Louis et al simply discloses a joining means 33, which may be a hot melt, a double-sided adhesive or, preferably, autogenous welding. None such "joining means" contemplate an application means upstream of the overlap location and a

pressure application arrangement downstream of the application means, as set forth in amended claim 29.

For the above reasons, claim 29 is believed to patentably define over the Lucas et al and Louis et al references. A review of the remaining references of record similarly fails to show or suggest the claimed subject matter, and accordingly claim 29 is believed allowable.

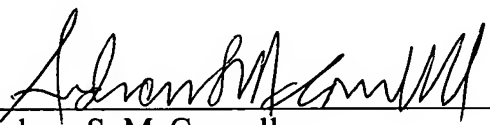
Claims 30-34 and 40 depend directly or indirectly from amended claim 29, and are believed allowable for the above reasons as well as in view of the subject matter of each claim.

Independent method claim 35 has been amended similarly to claim 29. For the same reasons noted with respect to claim 29, it is thus believed that claim 35 also patentably defines over the Lucas et al and Louis et al references, as well as the remaining references of record. Claims 36-39 and 41 depend directly or indirectly from claim 35, and are thus also believed allowable.

Applicant's attorney has made every effort to place the application into condition for allowance with claims 29-41, and such action is earnestly requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by phone if questions remain after consideration of this response, or if such would otherwise facilitate prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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